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F.B.I. Reports 15 Contacts For Walker With Russians

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WASHINGTON, June 19 — The Federal Bureau of Investigation has identified at least 15 meetings or "contacts" between John A. Walker Jr. and Soviet intelligence agents since 1977, according to documents the F.B.I. released recently.

The documents charge that Mr. Walker, who is accused of forming a Navy spy ring at least two decades ago, traveled the world as part of the purported espionage operation. At least eight of the meetings took place in Vienna, and there were others as far away as Hong Kong and Manila, the bureau said.

Prosecutors have released a document indicating that the Russians had asked Mr. Walker to gather specific types of secret military information. Mr. Walker has pleaded not guilty, as have the other three people arrested in the case.

From these documents, and others released recently, is emerging a more detailed account of Mr. Walker's movements, his reported contacts with Soviet agents and their methods of operations.

Russians Told Minor Details

Mr. Walker apparently believed that the Russians had great interest in his family life, documents show. In letters that the bureau says were written by Mr. Walker to Soviet agents, he tells at length about the health and career prospects of family members and friends.

Officials say that there were many more liaisons between Mr. Walker and the Russians than have been publicly disclosed.

According to the bureau, an informant has said that Mr. Walker passed information to Soviet intelligence agents in the Washington area every three months. The informant has been identified by Government officials as either Mr. Walker's former wife, Barbara, or daughter Laura.

Many of the meetings were detailed in the indictment earlier this week of Jerry A. Whitworth, a retired Navy communication specialist who has been identified as Mr. Walker's closest friend.

Mr. Walker's son, Michael, and older brother Arthur have also been charged in the reported conspiracy, which has been described as the largest Soviet spy ring uncovered in this country in 30 years. Michael Walker was on active duty in the Navy when he was arrested, and the other three men arrested in the case served in the Navy.

A law-enforcement official who asked not to be identified said the

F.B.I. had been able to trace Mr. Walker's journeys through telephone and travel records, many of which were seized in a search Mr. Walker's home and office in Norfolk, Va.

Number of Russians Unclear

The indictment does not say how many individual Soviet agents were involved in the operation. But the official said it was clear that "at least a few" agents had met or made contact with Mr. Walker over the years.

Mr. Walker was arrested last month after leaving more than 100 secret Navy documents at a secluded site in Maryland. A vice consul at the Soviet Embassy in Washington who was seen near the site has since been recalled to Moscow, the F.B.I. said.

While the bureau asserts that Mr. Walker has been spying for at least 20 years, it has not given details of any meetings between him and Russians before 1977.

The earliest liaison disclosed so far supposedly occurred on Aug. 16, 1977, apparently in Hong Kong. On that day, the bureau said in an affidavit, Mr. Walker met with someone described as "his Soviet contact." The meeting was noted in papers found in Mr. Walker's house, the bureau said.

Prosecutors have charged that Mr. Walker gave the Russians secret information that he gathered from Mr. Whitworth, who was then a Navy communications officer assigned to the aircraft carrier Constellation.

The F.B.I. said that the Constellation was docked in Hong Kong the day before Mr. Walker's purported meeting. On Aug. 16, six days before the meeting, Mr. Whitworth received an \$8,000 payment from Mr. Walker, according to the Whitworth indictment.

Since then, the documents assert, Mr. Walker has had at least 14 meetings or contacts with Russians. The bureau said that a contact is something other than a face-to-face meeting, perhaps a hand signal or a drop of material at a selected point.

Vienna Meeting Reported

According to the bureau, the next meeting was five months later, on Jan. 21, 1978, when Mr. Walker saw a Soviet agent in Vienna. It could not be determined from the documents whether the contact was with the same individual Mr. Walker had seen in Hong Kong.

Mr. Walker had meetings or contacts with Russians at least four more times in 1978, the bureau said. The agency said that two of them took place in Washington, one in Manila and one in Vienna.

On at least six occasions from 1979 through 1982, Mr. Walker traveled to Vienna to meet with Soviet contacts, court documents charge. A review of court documents indicated that the Soviets had made specific requests for information from Mr. Walker.

Prosecutors have made available a letter, found at the Maryland drop site, which they say was written by Mr. Walker to a Soviet agent. The letter, addressed to "Dear Friend," refers to the sort of military information that "we seek" from an operative code-named K, the prosecutors said.

Brother Said to Be K

Mr. Walker's brother Arthur, an employee of a Virginia defense contractor, was later identified as K. "K and I have discussed your proposal," the letter continued. "And I will pass on some extensive details when we meet." Arthur Walker has been charged with smuggling secret documents from the contractor to his brother.

In giving details to his Soviet contacts about his life and that of his family, according to court documents, Mr. Walker told them about the health and career prospects of members of his family who are believed to have nothing to do with the purported espionage operation.